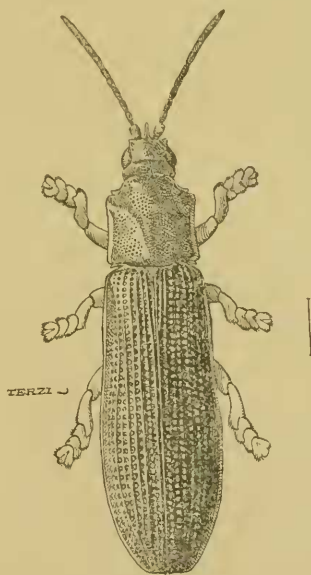


LVI.—*A new Hispid Beetle injurious to Nipa Palm.* By S. MAULIK, Professor of Zoology in the University of Calcutta.

THROUGH the courtesy of Dr. G. A. K. Marshall I have had the opportunity of examining the following species, which is reported to be injurious to Nipa palms in the Federated Malay States. It belongs to the genus *Plesispa*, Chapuis (Gen. Col. vol. ii. 1875, p. 290), which contains only one species—*P. reichei*, Chap.,—from which the present insect is quite different.

*Plesispa nipa*, sp. n.

Upperside subnitid, elytra brownish black, with the lateral margins and the base dark red-brown; eyes black; the head, the pronotum, and the antennæ dark red-brown, the latter in some specimens suffused with black. Underside lighter brown, portions of the several segments of the legs being darker brown.



*Plesispa nipa*, Maulik.

*Head*: interocular space elevated into a well-defined area which is broader than long, with a coarsely punctate surface and a median sulcation; produced between the antennæ into a sharp process, which is grooved on the upper side—in this character this species differs from *P. reichei*, in which the interantennal process is broader and truncate at the apex.

The collar coarsely punctate. The antennæ hardly surpassing the prothorax, the first joint the thickest and coarsely punctate, the second thinner than the first but thicker than the third, slightly longer than each of the following three, which are equal in length, the seventh a little longer than each of the preceding ones, eighth to eleventh equal in length, the last being bluntly pointed, the surface of the third to eleventh smooth. *Prothorax* quadrate, at each of the anterior and posterior lateral angles there is a small notch in the form of an acute crescent; the sides are margined and slightly sinuate; from each of the anterior lateral angles on either side a smooth sinuate ridge runs obliquely backwards on the disc; the surface coarsely punctate except in the front, where the punctures are finer; the posterior central area is smooth. In the structure of the prothorax this insect resembles more the genera *Nesohispa*, Maulik, and *Brontispa*, Sharp, than *Plesispa*. *Scutellum* triangular, smooth, dark red-brown. *Elytra* parallel-sided, slightly narrowed behind the humerus, in which it differs from *P. reichei*. The surface is not depressed as in *Nesohispa* or *Brontispa*. The external apical angles are broadly rounded. The sutural angles are without any sharp points. Lateral margin is dilated for a short distance behind the shoulder. Regularly punctate-striate, each elytron having, besides a scutellar row, on the narrowed portion eight rows, and posterior to it ten rows, the fifth row giving rise to two, which again meet before the apical area. The alternate interstices are inclined to be more costate than they are in *P. reichei*. *Underside* smooth, shining. The colour of the abdominal segments is darker in *P. reichei* than it is in the present species.

Length 7 mm.

Described from eight examples.

Type in the British Museum.

Co-types in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Malacca, 28. i. 1921.

The insect was sent to Dr. G. A. K. Marshall by the Director of Agriculture, Federated Malay States.

The larvæ of the beetles belonging to this group are leaf-miners, and often do considerable damage to young shoots.

The following note, indicating the use of the Nipa palm, occurs on page 776 in Watt's 'Commercial Products of India' (London, 1908):—"The leaves (*golpatta*) are very largely employed for thatching and in making mats. In the Strait Settlements they are used for covering cigarettes. Toddy is obtained from the spathe, and the young fruit is edible. Gamble states that the trade in *golpatta* leaves in the Sundribans amounts to 135,000 tons, valued at Rs. 60,000."